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LETTER DATED 11 FEBRUARY 199 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward the attached statement by the Government of the State of Eritrea on Security Council resolution 1227 (1999), issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 11 February 1999.

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the text of the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Haile MENKERIOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

99-03656 (E) 110299

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Annex

Statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea on 11 February 1999

The Government of the State of Eritrea reiterates its appreciation of the concerns of the Security Council, as indeed this was communicated on 2 February 1999, and wishes to make the following observations concerning resolution 1227 (1999) of 10 February 1999:

1. Eritrea did not start the war and consequently cannot be held responsible for it. Eritrea reaffirms its commitment not to start war. On the other hand, it must be recognized that it has, and shall, exercise the legitimate right of self-defence in the face of aggression.

2. Eritrea has not conducted any air strikes and has not violated the moratorium on air strikes. However, it reserves the right to retaliate if attacked by air.

3. Eritrea has not committed any crimes against civilians and has not violated, and shall never violate, any human rights. It is therefore a matter of great disappointment that the Security Council has preferred not to address this glaring reality.

4. No decision has been taken by the Security Council to embargo the sales of arms to States that are a cause of regional instability and insecurity. It is therefore astonishing to note that the Council has taken such an unprecedented step in this case. It must be noted that his will only lead to regional imbalance.